

# The Facility Training Captain: An Emerging Model for In-Service Training

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During the past two decades, the large jail systems of the country found themselves subject to enormous forces of change affecting every aspect of operations. Noteworthy among these changes was the requirement for increased staff training in response to the prisoner rights movement. The resulting pressures dictated not only new curricular content, but also the length of training and the specific groups of employees to be provided entry, annual in-service, and specialized training.

In short, correctional agency training programs became the common denominator for translating the

were various new custody and security procedures, standards for due process protection, environmental health, use of force guidelines, sexual harassment/EEO law, inmate-officer interpersonal communications, drug awareness, and emergency, riot and hostage control programs.

Concurrently, the continuing increase in the inmate population and the velocity of movement among jail populations had deleterious effects on the institutional environment. This situation heightened the need for recruiting new correction officers and developing training and retention initiatives throughout the nation.

The New York City Department of Correction, as the world's largest municipal detention service, was in the mainstream of these events. The need for new and proactive training

methods in the context of the department's mission was obvious. The facility training captain (FTC)

program was developed as a

direct response to these dynamic demographics "on both sides of the bars."

According to Chapter 25 of the current New York City Charter, the mission of the Department of Correction is to "provide custody for persons in detention and individuals sentenced to one year or less, in an environment which is safe for staff and inmates and which is consistent with constitutional and professional standards. Program services in the Department are structured to lead to successful re-entry into the community." In addition, the department is responsible for transporting detained persons to courts. The Department of Correction's mission requires a comprehensive and flexible training system.

## Genesis of the FTC Model

The FTC concept was developed in 1982 as a new method for delivering in-service training. Its intent was to provide a training bridge between the centralized Correction Academy and the individual facilities, units, and commands of the department.

The initial program provided a facility training captain for each of the major jails and rotating FTC coverage for the smaller hospital, transportation, and support services commands. The program initially had a dual reporting structure, in which each FTC reported both to the

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requirements of the prisoner rights movement into the corrections context. Among the new issues to be covered by training programs

warden of his facility and to the Commanding Officer of the Correction Academy. The department's Director of Training maintained quality control by coordinating institutional training in compliance with the training objectives of the Correction Academy.

**T**he primary mission of the FTC program was to create a cadre of "master trainers," deployed full time, to assist entry-level correction officers in their adjustment from the recruit training classroom to the jail work environment. Objectives were:

- To convey to new employees the department's mission and institutional goals.
- To instruct new employees in institutional policies, procedures, and programs.
- To familiarize employees with the jail chain of command, line of authority, and responsibilities.
- To familiarize employees with the institution grounds and physical plant.
- To improve employees' skills and to train for special assignments.
- To develop human relations skills to assist in establishing productive and professional relationships with inmates.
- To provide a cadre of resource people for utilization by the new employee at all levels of management and in all institutional departments and programs.

- To give new correction officers a direct role model and resource agent to assist in assimilation of procedures.

The modalities of training designed for the FTC program included the following:

- Classroom instruction (one one-hour session daily).
- Instructors and speakers from within the facility and the department at large.
- Specialist guest speakers from outside the agency.
- Training bulletins and handouts.
- Roll call presentations.
- One-on-one consultation with correction officers and/or supervisors and civilian staff and/or supervisors.
- Audio/visual programs.

### **FTC: A Model for Strategic Training Deployment**

In 1990, the FTC program will be revised to accommodate increased demand in both the volume and the variety of Academy-based, in-service training. The program revision will utilize a centralized roster control system as a basis for developing a department-wide training information system.

The training information system will document veteran personnel's successful completion of in-service training, and will serve as a database

for funding and budget control. The system also will document compliance with minimum standards promulgated by federal, state, and local training oversight commissions. Finally, it will provide individualized transcripts that document staff training, to protect the department from potential vicarious liability litigation based on failure to train, failure to supervise, or negligent retention.

**T**he FTC program, as a strategic training deployment model, will place Academy FTCs under the sole supervision of the commanding officer of post-entry training. This will replace the earlier system, in which FTCs also reported to their facility wardens.

Institutional wardens will now apply to the Correction Academy for facility-based training assistance, and the Academy will respond by assigning a single FTC or a team of FTCs to provide the needed training. This model will make possible immediate and strategic coverage of the entire department's training needs.

Simultaneously, training areas needed department-wide will be integrated into the annual Academy-based, in-service training program. In this sense, FTCs will serve as consultants to their own departments, and will network internal resources to improve on-going training and staff development in all branches of the agency. Examples of topics for institution-

specific and special issues training are:

- Preventing inmate suicide.
- Re-familiarization with fire safety equipment.
- Orientations on the physical plant and procedures, for staff assigned to newly-opened jails.
- Orientations to support managerial innovations, including:
  - Sensitivity training for male officers assigned to female housing units, and for male officers who supervise females;
  - Orientations to ease the transition to unit management; and
  - Orientations for custodial staff assigned to drug rehabilitation housing.
- Orientations for staff assigned to non-traditional correctional settings, such as barges and ferries.
- Physical training for skills retention re: the agency's use of force directive, which sets forth departmental guidelines for the appropriate use of force.
- Implementing high-priority operational directives.

### **Modification of the FTC Model: Contributing Factors**

The original FTC model was designed for a smaller jail system. Changes are needed in the model because it has become impossible for a single FTC to provide the variety and scale of training required to

meet the staff needs of the agency's mega-jails. Other reasons for the modification are:

- The department's structured agency-wide, in-service training plan, overseen by the city's Office of Management and Budget, mandates monthly training hours.
- Efficient and effective implementation of this training plan requires **centralized** delivery, as opposed to delivery on an institutional level.
- Under the earlier dual reporting structure, FTCs became support agents of the institutional wardens, and a significant portion of their time was devoted to non-training, administrative tasks.
- Centralized deployment of FTCs will provide the flexibility needed to assess, design, and deliver special issues and institution-specific training requested by facility wardens on an as-needed basis.

Traditionally in the institutional setting, training exists at the convenience of custody. Current overtime patterns in jails have reduced the FTCs' ability to schedule and conduct facility-based classroom training. Under total Academy control, however, training can be deployed to complement custody. Strategic deployment of the FTCs will make it possible to assess training needs, as distinguished from operational exigencies.

### **Managing the Training Function in the Mega-Jail Environment**

The corporate model for in-service training has become a reality in modern-day corrections. Previously, our emphasis was on grooming entry personnel for an essentially custodial role. As noted, though, the events of the past two decades have dramatically shifted the training function from a supporting to a central role in agency priorities and responsibilities.

Significantly, within the training domain the priority has also shifted from entry to incumbent personnel. Hence, the FTC model has emerged for strategically deploying resources to cover the complex range of staff roles and responsibilities.

**T**raining cannot do what management will not do. Training cannot exist at the convenience of custody. In fact, correctional administrators increasingly need to work toward a dual goal: not custody or training, but custody **and** training. The mutuality of these two functions is crucial to effective jail operations. The New York City Department of Correction's FTC Program represents a model that works toward this goal.

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